

# *Chesham Urban District Council.*



## REPORT

OF THE

## MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

*For the Year 1915.*

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THOMAS F. LONG,

*Medical Officer of Health.*



# To the Chairman and Members of the Chesham Urban District Council.

GENTLEMEN,

I have pleasure in presenting my nineteenth Annual Report on the general health of your district, the time under consideration being the year 1915.

In a circular letter received from the Local Government Board with the forms for the returns of vital statistics it is suggested that under existing circumstances I am to confine my remarks to a record of what has taken place during the year, which I shall accordingly do.

## Population.

Owing to the number of men that have been drafted to military training centres or sent abroad a difficulty has arisen in estimating this. Under the circumstances authorities on such matters have estimated the population of each district and the figures for the year have been forwarded to me from the County Council. In this way the estimated population of Chesham at the present time is 7,964.

This may be right; personally I think it is not, for in the middle of 1914 I made your population 8,384. I shall be very much surprised to hear that only 420 of our population have joined the colours.

Starting with this as our basis I make the birth rate of your district 20.2, with an uncorrected number of births of 161.

The death rate of the district I make 12, with a total of 96 deaths. This is much larger than for many years, but one must take into consideration that on the figures forwarded to us we have lost at least 420 able-bodied persons in the prime of life, who under ordinary circumstances would have counted in with our population, and so kept the rate down. Under any circumstances, however, it would have been higher owing to an increase in the number of deaths.

## Infant Mortality.

This is again low, 55.9, with nine deaths. Of this number 4 deaths were due to premature birth, 1 to a congenital malformation, and 1 other that of a weakling; all of which we can safely say had very little chance of living, so that we can really reduce the deaths of children under one year of age to 3.

## Net Death Rate.

This has been increased from 10 to 14.6, chiefly due to the number of deaths occurring of Chesham inhabitants who died in institutions outside the area. This has jumped from 7 in 1914 to 25 in 1915. Of this number 14 are certified as occurring in the Workhouse Infirmary at Amersham, and 3 at the Asylum at Stone.

In looking through the list what strikes one most about it is the age of the people whose deaths are here recorded. Of the 25 cases, 14 had passed the allotted span of 70 years, 3 of the number could lay claim to between 80 and 90 years of existence, while 3 others had passed the ninety mark.

This, I think, shows pretty conclusively that at any rate our old people are not neglected

when, owing to force of circumstances, they are compelled to take up their residence in these institutions.

## Notification of Infectious Disease.

During the year 1915 I received 27 notifications of infectious disease as against 112 for the preceding year.

These are made up as follows, the table showing the attack rate for the three preceding years for comparison with this:

	Cases	Attack rate	Attack rate	Attack rate	Attack rate
	1915	1912	1913	1914	1915
Diphtheria	...	1	.37	.36	.35
Erysipelas	...	1	.61	.84	.47
Scarlet Fever	...	5	.24	1.68	9.18
Enteric Fever	...	—	—	.24	.11
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	...	14	—	2.28	1.66
Other forms of Tuberculosis	...	5	—	2.40	.95
Ophthalmia	...	—	—	—	—
Neonatorum	...	1	—	—	.11
					.12

With these figures before me I feel very much inclined to give the lie direct to those busy-bodies who are apparently making it their business to circulate the report that Chesham is one of the most unhealthy spots on earth.

That this report is circulated is no hearsay. I am constantly having to contradict the statement myself. I trust that those who have the interest of the town at heart will be very careful not to help on any remarks of this sort that may be made, and if there be any who think that by making them they can get a hit at the ruling body, who are at any rate doing their best, they must try another way in future, as if they have any interest in the town they are only doing themselves a considerable amount of harm by this tale.

During the year anthrax has been added to our list of notifiable diseases.

## Notification of Measles.

When I write my next annual report we shall have had measles and German measles added to our list of notifiable diseases. Personally I am of opinion that this was quite an unnecessary proceeding in a district like this. I can see no benefit at all to be derived from it, while it will add a considerable amount of both labour and expense.

If we are forced to do so we shall of course have to go into the question of appointing nurses and other officers to take on these various duties, but at the present time I do not propose to put before you any scheme that will add to the expenses unless I am convinced that the district will derive some benefit from it.

## Housing.

This bids fair to be a very pressing matter in your district. There is certainly a tendency to build new factories within your area, and what

is to be done with the workers, as far as house accommodation is concerned, unless some very bold steps are taken I fail to see.

I am aware that you as a Council have acquired certain rights on land with a view to starting a scheme for the erection of cottages, and I trust that the very earliest opportunity will be taken of getting the scheme in working order.

Personally I am of opinion that you will not improve on the cottages that were erected by you in Brockhurst Road. I feel very strongly that if you had three times the number that you now have, they would all be let, provided, of course, that you were able to let them at the rent at present charged.

### Sanitary Inspection of the District.

From your Sanitary Inspector's report, which is presented with this, you will see that a very large amount of work has been done in this direction.

I do not propose to enlarge upon the matter otherwise than by putting on record that I am perfectly satisfied with the work that has been done and also with the way in which the duties have been carried out.

Thanking you for all the assistance and support I have received in carrying out the duties of my office during the year,

I am, Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

Yours obedient servant,

THOMAS F. LONG,

M.O.H. Chesham U.D.C.

## CHESHAM URBAN SANITARY AUTHORITY.

### Public Health Acts, 1875 to 1890.

Summary of work done through the Sanitary Inspector during the year ending December 31st, 1915 :—

	Totals.	Re- ceived atten- tion.	Re- ceiving atten- tion.
Visits to premises	3144		
Defects found :—			
Choked or defective soil drains	71	71	—
Choked or defective surface water drains	8	8	—
Broken or dirty w.c. pans	13	13	—
Defective water fittings in w.c.'s (chiefly flushing cisterns)	113	108	5
Damp walls in dwelling-houses	5	5	—
Defective walls, floors, etc., in dwelling-houses	8	8	—
Dirty walls or ceilings in dwelling-houses	6	6	—
Defective roofs in dwelling-houses	22	16	6
Defective or unsuitable ventilation (chiefly broken sash cords)	14	12	2

	Totals.	Re- ceived atten- tion.	Re- ceiving atten- tion.
Defective eaves, guttering or fall pipes	22	11	11
Overcrowding	1	1	—
Dilapidated w.c.'s	8	8	—
Offensive accumulations	10	10	—
Defective paving in yards	14	12	2
Improper keeping of animals	3	3	—
Various, unclassified	6	4	2
	324	296	28

Arising out of the above work 12 preliminary notices and 198 letters were written.

### New Dwelling-Houses Erected

These are all supplied with water from the Council's water mains, and the drainage connected to the main sewerage system.

### Slaughterhouses.

Number on register	...	...	8
Number of visits	...	...	280
Number of carcasses examined :—			
Beasts	...	...	250
Sheep	...	...	351
Pigs	...	...	221

No seizures have been made, but the following was voluntarily surrendered :—

			lbs.
Beef (approximately)	...	...	1760
Pork	...	...	160
Offal	...	...	240

### Bakehouses.

Number on register	...	...	14
(One of these has been closed during the year)			
Number of inspections	...	...	36
Verbal requests to limewash	...	...	8
(These requests were complied with).			

### Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops.

Number of dairymen or purveyors of milk on the register	...	...	22
(No fresh registrations have been made during the year)			
Number of cowkeepers on the register	...	...	9
(No fresh registrations have been made during the year)			
Number of visits to cowsheds	...	...	32
Number of visits to dairies or purveyor's premises	...	...	44
3 verbal requests to limewash cowsheds were complied with.			

### Common Lodging-Houses.

Number on register	...	...	2
Number of visits	...	...	9
Verbal requests to limewash	...	...	2

### Infectious Disease.

Number of cases notified :—			
Scarlet Fever	...	...	5
Diphtheria	...	...	1
Erysipelas	...	...	1

51 visits were made to these cases, and 15 houses were disinfected for various causes



TABLE I.

Vital Statistics of Whole District during 1915 and previous Years.

Year.	Population estimated to Middle of each Year.	Births.			Total Deaths Registered in the District.		Transferable Deaths		Nett Deaths belonging to the District.			
		Un-corrected number	Nett.		Number	Rate.	of Non-residents registered in the District	of Residents not registered in the District	Under 1 yr. of age.		At all ages.	
			Number	Rate.					Number	Rate per 1,000 Nett Births.	Number	Rate.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1910	8156	181	181	21.2	86	10.5	1	11	9	49.7	96	11.7
1911	8192	162	162	19.7	87	10.6	1	18	12	74.0	104	12.6
1912	8251	164	164	19.8	92	11.1	—	12	17	103.6	104	12.5
1913	8312	158	160	19.2	79	9.4	4	19	9	56.2	94	11.3
1914	8384	171	172	20.5	82	9.7	5	7	10	58.1	84	10.0
1915	7964	161	165	20.2	96	12.0	4	25	9	55.9	117	14.6

TABLE II.

Cases of Infectious Disease notified during the year 1915.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES.	NUMBER OF CASES NOTIFIED.							
	At all Ages.	At Ages—Years.						
		Under 1.	1 and under 5 years.	5 and under 15 years.	15 and under 25 years.	25 and under 45 years.	45 and under 65 years.	65 and upwards.
Small-pox ... ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cholera (C) Plague (P) ... ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Diphtheria (including Membranous croup)	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
Erysipelas ... ..	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
Scarlet Fever ... ..	5	1	—	2	1	1	—	—
Typhus Fever ... ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Enteric Fever ... ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Relapsing Fever (R) Continued Fever (C)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Puerperal Fever ... ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cerebro-spinal Meningitis ... ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Poliomyelitis ... ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ophthalmia Neonatorum ... ..	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Pulmonary Tuberculosis ... ..	14	—	—	1	4	8	1	—
Other forms of Tuberculosis ... ..	5	—	1	3	1	—	—	—
Totals ... ..	27	2	1	7	7	9	1	—

TABLE III.

Deaths registered during the Calendar Year 1915 classified by age and cause.

CAUSES OF DEATH.	Nett Deaths at the subjoined ages of "Residents" whether occurring within or without the District (a).									Total Deaths whether of "Residents" or "non-Residents" in inscriptions in the "Register" (b).
	All Ages.	Under 1 year.	1 and under 2 years.	2 and under 5 years.	5 and under 15 years.	15 and under 25 years.	25 and under 45 years.	45 and under 65 years.	65 and upwards.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
All causes { Certified (c) ...	116	9	3	4	1	7	14	22	56	9
{ Uncertified ...	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Enteric Fever... ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Small-pox ... ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Measles ... ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Scarlet Fever ... ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Whooping Cough ... ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Diphtheria and Croup ... ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Influenza ... ..	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—
Erysipelas ... ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Phthisis	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
(Pulmonary Tuberculosis)	10	—	—	—	—	5	3	1	1	—
Tuberculous Meningitis ... ..	4	—	1	1	1	—	—	—	1	2
Other Tuberculous Diseases	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
Cancer, malignant disease ... ..	12	—	—	—	—	—	2	4	6	—
Rheumatic Fever ... ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Meningitis ... ..	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
Organic Heart Disease ... ..	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	1
Bronchitis ... ..	19	1	—	1	—	—	1	6	10	1
Pneumonia (all forms) ... ..	6	—	1	—	—	2	2	1	—	1
Other diseases of Respiratory Organs ... ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Diarrhoea and Enteritis ... ..	2	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
Appendicitis and Typhlitis	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
Cirrhosis of Liver ... ..	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Alcoholism ... ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Nephritis and Bright's Disease ... ..	3	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	1	1
Puerperal Fever ... ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Other accidents and diseases of Pregnancy and Parturition	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Congenital Debility and Malformation, including Premature Birth ... ..	6	6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Violent Deaths, excluding Suicide ... ..	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
Suicide ... ..	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Other Defined Diseases ... ..	34	2	—	2	—	—	3	6	21	—
Diseases ill-defined or unknown ... ..	7	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	7	—
Totals ... ..	117	9	3	4	1	7	14	22	57	9

TABLE IV.  
Infant Mortality. •

1915. Nett Deaths from stated causes at various Ages under 1 Year of Age.

CAUSES OF DEATH.				Under 1 week.	1-2 weeks.	2-3 weeks.	3-4 weeks.	Total under 4 weeks.	4 weeks and under 3 months.	3 months and under 6 months.	6 months and under 9 months.	9 months and under 12 months.	Total Deaths under 1 year.
All causes	Certified	...	...	4	—	—	1	5	3	1	—	—	9
	Uncertified	...	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Convulsions	...	...	...	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1
Bronchitis	...	...	...	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1
Congenital Malformations (c)	...	...	...	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	1
Premature Birth	...	...	...	4	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	—	4
Atrophy, Debility and Marasmus	...	...	...	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1
Other causes	...	...	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
Totals	...	...	...	4	—	—	1	5	3	1	—	—	9

